

Budget Related Motion on the Mayor's 2015-16 Budget

Mover: John Biggs AM

Seconded: Valerie Shawcross AM

This Assembly believes that, while the Mayor has been quick to trumpet the “amazing success”¹ of his Mayoralty, he has undermined the ability of his successor to ensure London has a sufficient number of police officers, wasted considerable sums of Londoners’ money on ‘white elephants’ and vanity projects, failed to address London’s housing crisis in a meaningful way, and leaves a legacy of insecure and low paid employment in the capital.

Policing

This Assembly notes the Mayor’s insistence that he protected the Metropolitan Police Service’s operational capability during his Mayoralty². However, this rhetoric is contradicted by the facts:

- Police numbers have not actually been at 32,000 at any point during this Mayoralty and were, in fact, as low as 30,036 in January 2014³;
- Since May 2010, 2,550 Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) have been lost across London⁴ – a 60% cut.
- Insufficient numbers of officers and the loss of PCSOs has led directly to an overstretched police force with low morale⁵.
- Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary⁶ (HMIC) and the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime⁷ have been forced to conclude that there will be further ‘drastic’ cuts to police numbers after 2016 if further funding is not found.

As a consequence of Boris Johnson’s cuts, it will be impossible for the next Mayor of London to maintain sufficient police numbers without additional funding. The Metropolitan Police Federation recently reminded Londoners that “playing Russian roulette with the safety and welfare of our communities and the brave officers of the Metropolitan Police is simply not acceptable”⁸. Cuts have consequences.

Transport

This Assembly notes that, despite using his penultimate budget to emphasise his ‘determination to cut the cost of living for Londoners’⁹ by implementing a precept cut worth 7.7 pence per week to average Band D household¹⁰, **the Mayor has been responsible for a 47% increase in bus fares and a 37% increase in Tube fares since 2008**¹¹.

While reducing the GLA share of council by £4 in 2015-16, **a couple living in Uxbridge using Zone 1-6 annual Travelcards will have seen their annual fare rise by £1,120**¹² since Boris Johnson came to power.

¹ Conservative Party, *Boris Johnson: Speech to Conservative Party Conference 2014*, retrieved 14.01.15

² Op. cit. Draft Consolidated Budget for 2015-16, p.1

³ London Datastore, May 2010 compared to Nov 2014 figs – latest available retrieved Jan 2015

⁴ London Datastore, May 2010 compared to Nov 2014 figs – latest available retrieved Jan 2015

⁵ Met police taking time off work with stress-related illnesses, *The Guardian*, 28th Dec 2014

⁶ HMIC Report “Responding to Austerity: MPS” July 2014

⁷ Sean O’Neill, Met chief given two more years despite calls for his resignation, *The Times*, 17.11.14

⁸ Metropolitan Police Federation, [How #CutsHaveConsequences to your police service in London](#), 21.01.15

⁹ Mayor of London (2014), Draft Consolidated Budget for 2015-16, p.1

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Figures supplied by [Transport for London](#), retrieved 23.01.2015

¹² Figures supplied by [Transport for London](#), ‘Travelcard seasons’, retrieved 23.01.2015

This Assembly also notes that, despite claiming that one of his greatest priorities is “to ensure that every penny the GLA spends delivers value for money for the taxpayer”, the Mayor has squandered vast sums of Londoners’ money on vanity projects and ‘white elephant’ transport projects:

- **The Cable Car** that Boris claimed ‘wouldn’t cost taxpayers a penny’¹³, which subsequently cost taxpayers £61m¹⁴ to build and was later found to have just four regular users¹⁵;
- **The Cycle Hire scheme** that Boris pledged to introduce at ‘no cost to the taxpayer’¹⁶, which will have cost taxpayers £225m by 2016¹⁷, making it the most costly to the taxpayer in the world¹⁸.
- **The ‘new Routemaster Bus’** fleet, which will cost £40m more to purchase than an equivalent number of hybrid double-deckers¹⁹; and, due to the need for an second crew member, will cost a further £37.2million per year to operate than the hybrid alternative²⁰.
- **The ‘Garden Bridge’** is already costing taxpayers £60m²¹, but the taxpayer share of this project – described in the *Daily Telegraph* as “a costly nightmare, a gargantuan vanity project and a marketing tool”²², and which Boris Johnson himself admitted he ‘doesn’t quite know the point of’²³ – risks ballooning to almost £100m if an outstanding £65m can’t be found.
- **The ‘fantasy island airport’ feasibility study**, which the Mayor spent £5.2m²⁴ of taxpayers’ money on, despite Conservative-run Medway Council stating that it was a proposal “without any known financial backing, poor connectivity, a disastrous environmental impact, and...little support from airlines.”²⁵

Housing

This Assembly believes that, with 379,990 London households living in overcrowded houses,²⁶ average house prices now topping £500,000 for the first time²⁷, and with average private rents due to reach £1,600 a month by the end of Boris Johnson’s term in 2016²⁸, there can be no doubt that one of Boris Johnson’s main legacies as Mayor will be London’s severe housing shortage.

¹³ Rob Williams, Boris under fire after it is revealed that Thames cable car will cost £6m to run in first year, *The Independent*, 10.01.13

¹⁴ London Assembly Budget and Performance Committee, Jon Fox (Director, London Rail, TfL) in response to questioning by Stephen Knight AM, 25.06.14

Transcript of Item 10: Viability of London’s Sponsored Transport Schemes

¹⁵ Matthew Beard, Boris Johnson’s ‘pitiful’ £60m cable car used by just four regular commuters, *Evening Standard*, 21.11.13

¹⁶ Keith Gladdis, London’s 4,000 Boris bikes cost taxpayers £1,400 for each bicycle every year despite sponsorship from Barclays, *Daily Mail*, 11.07.14

¹⁷ Andrew Neather, Have the wheels begun to come off the Boris bikes?, *Evening Standard*, 06.08.13

¹⁸ Op.cit, London’s 4,000 Boris bikes cost taxpayers £1,400 for each bicycle...

¹⁹ Taxi Leaks (3 May 2013), [TfL reveals cost of New Bus for London fleet](#), Date retrieved: 09.09.2014

²⁰ Transport for London [‘New Routemasters’](#), retrieved 26.01.2015

²¹ Tom Edwards, Opposition to River Thames garden bridge plan grows, BBC News Online, 16.10.14

²² Tim Richardson, Garden Bridge: a blot on the landscape? *Daily Telegraph*, 20.12.14

²³ Asa Bennett, Boris Johnson Doesn’t Know ‘The Point’ Of The Garden Bridge (That He’s Paying £30m For), *Huffington Post*, 12.03.14

²⁴ [MD1334](#) on 9 April 2014 provided an extra £2m. [MD1080](#) provided an extra £3m. [MD1037](#) extended [MD806](#) which provided £200,000

²⁵ House of Commons (2014), Written evidence from Medway Council (AS 60), Transport Select Committee: Aviation Strategy (HC 78)

²⁶ Office for National Statistics

²⁷ London Assembly Housing and Planning Committee (2011), *Crowded houses: Overcrowding in London’s social rented housing*, p.8

²⁸ Copley, T., [Average London rents to top £1,600 by end of Mayor’s term](#), 07.03.14

On every level – supply, affordable housing, and property standards – the housing picture has dramatically deteriorated since Boris Johnson’s election in 2008:

- The Mayor will leave office having failed to deliver both of his affordable housing programmes to deadline.^{29,30}
- The Mayor’s reforms to affordable housing have meant that in some parts of inner-London, households could now require an income above £100,000 per year to afford the rent on a family-sized ‘affordable’ home.³¹
- On property standards, one-third of London’s privately rented homes – more than 250,000 – still fall below the Decent Homes standard used in the social rented sector, the largest proportion of any tenure in London.³²

Economy

Despite claiming that his “Budget is central to the promotion of jobs”³³, Boris Johnson’s record is questionable. Of the 200,000 jobs the Mayor has pledged to create, at least 131,000 are in the construction industry³⁴. However, forecasts by GLA Economics show that just 1,000 extra jobs are expected to have been created in this sector by 2016, highlighting the degree to which the Mayor’s jobs pledge has entirely misled Londoners.³⁵ In fact, jobs growth in this sector is expected to decline in each year from 2014 up until 2016.³⁶ Furthermore, the Mayor has abandoned his manifesto commitment to specifically “lead a campaign for 20,000 part-time jobs to help parents return to work”³⁷.

While this Assembly recognises that the Mayor has built on the work of his predecessor in promoting the London Living Wage, it notes that Boris Johnson’s efforts to promote a voluntary Living Wage have clearly been insufficient – the number of jobs paying less than the London Living Wage has increased sharply since 2007 from 13% to 17% of all jobs in the capital – that’s an extra 180,000 people earning less than they need for a basic existence in the capital³⁸.

Given his failings in these areas of strategic importance to London, this Assembly calls on the Mayor of London to revisit his 2015-16 Budget proposals with renewed emphasis on keeping Londoners safe, helping them travel around the city at reasonable cost, enabling them to find suitable homes, and creating a labour market that rewards hard work with fair pay.

²⁹ ‘Mayor admits homes goal will be missed’, Inside Housing, 2 December 2009

³⁰ ‘Boris Johnson forced to admit affordable housing target faces delay’, Evening Standard, 23 October 2014

³¹ ‘Joint Response to the London Plan Revised Early Minor Alterations’, London Borough of Brent, London Borough of Camden, London Borough of Enfield, London Borough of Hackney, London Borough of Islington, London Borough of Southwark, London Borough of Tower Hamlets, Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster City Council, 31 July 2012, p.10

³² ‘Stressed: A review of London’s private rented sector’, Centre for London, August 2013, p.50

³³ Op.cit, Draft Consolidated Budget for 2015-16, p.1

³⁴ ‘Measuring Jobs – Progress Report’, Greater London Authority Investment & Performance Board, 6 August 2013, p.2

³⁵ GLA Employment Projections, 2013 Projections Data. Found here: <http://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/gla-employment-projections>

³⁶ ‘London’s Economic Outlook: Autumn 2014, The GLA’s medium-term planning projections’, Greater London Authority, November 2014, p.34

³⁷ ‘Taking Greater London Forward’, Boris Johnson, 2012, p.17

³⁸ London Poverty Profile 2013, Trust for London & New Policy Institute, 2013, p.63